

population its mystical religions its open sexual immorality must have had much in common with Memphis or Babylon. Intellectual force survived for some period the loss of physical vigour. and we have in Roman law the last traces of the energy which in Greece bore autumnal blossoms of poetry and philosophy. But the scholastic studies of the Romans degenerated into the trivial, mechanical kind that are still favoured at the Moslem university of El Azhar in Cairo. In Rome as in Greece, we appear to witness the gradual exhaustion of an exotic stream of northern vitality.

Many have been the explanations that have been marshalled by historians to account for the fall of the Roman Empire. The immediate cause was the incursion of savage enemies. But behind this lies, as the *causa causans*, the loss of spontaneity—of the spirit of change—in paralysing inclinations towards habitude. In the softening conditions of peace the people could not retain the energy that might impel them to take up arms and meet their enemies. They were content to bribe them, or to enlist them. They might even resort to such childish expedients as were used by the Spaniards of Panama when they attempted to head off the forces of the Welsh freebooter, Morgan, by loosing a herd of bulls upon them. The marauders shot the bulls,

dined off them. and were refreshed for
a deter-
mined assault on the morrow. We
may read in
the pages of Gibbon of the despairing
artifices
which a people that had become
inured to peace
attempted to substitute for the self-
sacrifice of
war. Peace and prosperity are only
consistent
with security when they leave
unquenched in the
national spirit some sparks of
spontaneous and
changeable energy which, touched by
the wind of